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ADVOCATE OF PEACE.

APRIL, 1844.

ELLIOTT'S THOUGHTS ON PEACE.—No. 1.

UNDER this title, a series of pithy and pungent articles appeared some time ago in one of our secular papers, over the signature of ELLIOTT. We read them with much pleasure, and wished to copy them; but, having been prevented at the time, we now select such portions as promise to be most permanently useful.

MISCONCEPTIONS OF PEACE.—How contemptuously are the advocates of peace regarded, how often are they spoken of as weak enthusiasts, whom wrong-headed kindness carries to the very extreme of Utopian folly! ‘Non-resistance, indeed! Why, the very statement of their opinions is a refutation of them. Not fight for their property, for self-preservation, for their wives, for their children; bear patiently every insult; when smitten upon one cheek, turn the other! If they could carry out these absurdities they would overthrow human government, let loose the hand of violence, break up all our cherished institutions, and change the brightness of civilization to savage darkness.’ Let us then examine the subject. Is there any danger from too much love, from too unqualified submission to injury? Have we been cautioned by Him, who knew what is in the hearts of men, lest we should bring evil upon the world by an excess of meekness and humility? Is the self-sacrificing spirit of the Christian, preferring others’ good to his own, to make him dangerous to society? There is something noble and glorious in forgiveness of injuries. The world may look scornfully, and speak scornfully, but in truth it cannot despise him who rules his own spirit, who strives each day to acquire a more and more decided victory over his selfishness. *He* is not the coward, he is not the *non-resistant*. He contends boldly with violence, but it is the violence of his own passions. He strives against the mad impulses which have deluged the earth with blood, but it is against those impulses which act within his own bosom. He takes his stand against the animal instincts which would look for good to self, reckless of the consequences to others; and though he will not answer reviling with reviling, return blow for blow, take life for life, he seeks for victory over his enemies within, that he may become the freeman of the Lord! Such men, men who strive that they may live without offence to others, are not the cowardly non-resistants. The rumor of war floats over the country; the business men leave their common pursuits, collect together in little circles, their hearts sinking within them; they tremble in fear of the war, yet they make no resistance; their fortunes are in others’ hands, yet they do not even whisper of their right to their own property; they dare not complain, but watch each coming mail in the hope that they in whose keeping they are may relent, in

the hope that they who rule over them may have mercy upon their possessions? Such men are the *non-resistants*. Many a Christian, too, *prays*, but quietly accommodates himself to war, if need be. No strong, united voice pervading the whole land, comes from the church against the sin, the cruelty, the rapine, the moral degradation of war! They too are the non-resistants. They submit to all the atrocities of war, permitting the religious character of the nation to be at the mercy of others. And if war comes, the widow's tears shall fall, the orphan's wail shall be heard, but the husband and father submits. Thousands shall be driven to the battle-field as sheep are driven to the slaughter, and the people are merry in their bondage to death. The bread which the poor man is carrying to his children shall be stricken from his hand, but the people do not resist. The laborer and the artisan, the yeoman and the sailor, shall pour out their blood as water, their bodies shall float on the deep, or their bones whiten the field, while the rich man shall remain at home, perchance feasting upon the spoils of war, yet *these* dare not complain. *They are the non-resistants!"*

PLEA FOR SLAUGHTER IN SELF-DEFENCE.—“We feel no want of respect for the peace men who hold to the right of self-defence. We believe them to be conscientious and true, striving to live peaceably with all men, and exerting themselves with an ardent zeal to save their country from the desolation of war. Human life is safe in the hands of such, and the bitterness of contention would be banished from the earth, if their character could influence the hearts of all on whom the dread question of peace or war depends. But is the commonly-received doctrine of the right of self-defence consonant with the spirit of Christianity? Is it in accordance with the pure and self-sacrificing temper of the gospel? Was it breathed from the lips of the Prince of peace? The doctrine was in the world before his advent. It is now the doctrine of the savage, the heathen, and the Mussulman. Has the gospel shed no clear light on this subject? Is there no purer tone in our religion than that which accords so harmoniously with the tone of the world? Is there no higher law, is there no more certain guide, than the impulses and passions of men? The right to kill in self-defence would be almost safe, if exercised only by these peace men,—by the kind, the benevolent, the forbearing. It would be a harmless abstraction to those who are non-resistants at heart. But if you yield the sword to any, you yield it to all; to be used, too, in the moments of intense excitement, when cool judgment has left her throne. You place it not only in the hands of the brave and collected, who can appreciate the danger, but the timid, who start at the rustling of the leaf, who tremble at the footsteps of a friend. You give the power over life, not to the generous and thoughtful, but to the passionate and quarrelsome; you constitute each man the judge in his own contention, the executioner of his own verdict. We might rest contented if the ‘right to destroy life were in the hands of *peace men*, who would use it *judiciously*. Nor would we contend for the whole truth, if we did not believe that the giving up of our point is the yielding up of the whole ground,—if we did not look upon the alleged rights of self-defence as the very corner-stone of the temple of war,—if the experience of the world had not convinced us that each man pretends that he uses the right judiciously, and that the consequence is that the earth is crimsoned with human blood; for every murder that the corruption and selfishness of human nature demands here finds its apology, here finds its excuse. ‘What, lose my life! suffer those I love to be murdered before my eyes, when I can destroy the assassin!’ exclaims the *peace man*; ‘it is a monstrous absurdity!’ ‘Submit to personal attacks,’ cries another, ‘and that when God has given me strength for resistance! the feelings of the man tell me what is my duty here.’ ‘Lose my reputation,’ says the duellist, because it is wrong to kill! my character is dearer to me than my life.’ ‘Receive an insult meekly?’ asks the man of honor; ‘let him beware of the steel who would insult me.’ ‘Submit to have my property taken from me

without resistance?' inquires the rich man; 'it would bring anarchy and confusion upon the earth; no one's rights would be safe.' 'Suffer these rich speculators to oppress the poor man!' shouts the infuriated mob; 'let them die first.' 'Starve, and see my poor wife and suffering children famish slowly, when others have more than enough!' says the highwayman; 'I will take what I need, and let him beware who would betray me.' 'Abandon our just rights, submit to the arrogance of the enemy, let our nation's honor be tarnished? No!' answers the patriot. 'Let the country be ravaged, its commerce be despoiled, its morals prostrated, its happiness given up, tens of thousands of lives destroyed, rather than yield the least of our claims.' Such is the law of violence,—such are the consequences of abandoning the pure, and peaceful, and forgiving precepts of Christianity. We need a law so plain that the wayfaring man though a fool cannot err; we need some sure criterion to know when God is pleased with carnage, and when he frowns upon the field of blood. Shall we destroy others in defence of life, only, when death to us would *assuredly* be the result of forbearance? We can never know till the knife has actually reached our heart, but that God may have in his providence designed to ward off the intended blow. Can we not as conscientiously destroy him who would do us that bodily injury which would probably result in death? Are there not other threatened evils worse to us than death itself? Must not the question, what is the species of violence which merits death, be left to every one's own judgment? Is there nothing worth contending for but the animal life? Can he who justifies homicide for the preservation of life, lift up his voice against the duellist, who is educated to believe that his honor is worth more to him than his life? If a neighborhood be assaulted by a mob, shall it not be resisted even unto death? If a town be attacked by pirates, shall not the citizens slay them? If the nation be invaded, shall we not fight for our homes and our firesides? Nay, shall we wait till we are actually attacked, and thus give the enemy the vantage ground? An army is therefore needed, for without a military force the liberty of the country would be in constant danger, and a few reckless men might destroy every town and city. We need a navy, too, for without this arm of resistance the pirate would float on every sea. We need forts and arsenals, barracks and navy-yards. We need military academies, that we may be taught the *noble science* of war; above all, we need a military spirit,—that should be fostered and encouraged, for without that all our other preparation would be useless. The right to declare war, too, must be lodged somewhere, and where but in government? This right should not be left to the people, for then there would be endless war, but without the unanimity that would enable them to conquer. We must fight then, when the government thinks it necessary; for shall we entrust our rulers with the power to make war, and aid them only when the quarrel is just in our individual judgment? Shall we receive protection from the sword, and not use the sword when our country needs it? Shall we ask others to fight for us when we esteem our rights to be invaded, and ungenerously refuse our aid when others deem their rights in jeopardy? No! If war ever be right, it is right when our country has decreed it; if it be ever justifiable, it is justifiable when any nation is at war with us, no matter how that war was caused; and he is a traitor who refuses his aid, or who would 'love his enemies, do good to them that hate him, and pray for those who despitefully use him.' Lord Abington remarked in the British Parliament, in 1784, that 'The best road to peace is war, and war carried on in the spirit with which we are taught to love our Maker, with our whole mind, and heart, and strength!' This certainly is a just sentiment, for that which is right in itself cannot be too earnestly performed. Let us be consistent. Let us keep ourselves armed, and teach our children the use of arms; let us encourage the military spirit; it is absurd to speak lightly of military displays, to talk of the corrupting influence of the army and navy, and of the horrors of the battle-field; of the moral degradation of war, when we owe our safety to the sword. Forbear,

then, to advocate the cause of peace, when you contend that it is unsafe to trust yourself, your friends, your country, to any protection but the sword. If, then, the aggression upon the life of others for our own safety leads to results so dangerous to the peace of society, so fatal to human happiness, is it not fair to conclude that it is a violation of the law of God? Is this the foundation of the temple of war, and was this corner-stone laid and consecrated by the Prince of peace? We wish it to be distinctly understood that we are not the advocates of the principles of non-resistance, as the tenets of a sect or party. We would not *dogmatically* assert that there are no situations in which it may be a duty to resort to physical force. We would not overthrow all human government, for government *may be* administered upon Christian principles. We believe that each individual for himself, with his heart full of love, is to decide the radical question for himself,—but that we all, whatever be the abstract notions of the rights of *aggression for self-defence*, should lift up the voice against the crime and curse of war. Here there is no debateable ground, no neutral position. What! shall Christians employ and pay Christians to murder their fellow-beings? Shall an army meet an army for the purpose of human destruction, and will God smile upon the scene, and shall the white robe of Christianity be spread over the carnage? If Sabbath-breaking and intemperance, if robbery and deception, if murder and violence, if moral degradation, if a change from love to deadly hatred, be not an *offence* which violates the law of God, then there is no sin, no crime, no act that is wrong when fallible men deem themselves in danger,—and all the laws of God designed to preserve the spiritual life can be repealed for the preservation of the life of the body,—then there is no law so high, and holy, and eternal, but that it can be brought down to earth and defiled, and trodden upon, when man shall deem it for his temporal interest."

No SECURITY YET FOR PEACE.—“We have no guarantee of peace. If saved from the devastation and moral corruption of war, it will be through the mercy of God overruling the wrath of men. The pathway of the nation is full of danger, yet she heeds not the perils which be on every side. Even when not a cloud rests on the political horizon, when there is not even a rumor of war, we are not safe for a month, or a day. The elements are often hushed deceitfully upon the very birth-instant of the storm. Who can look to the future with any confidence in the preservation of peace? The elements of contention are cherished in the midst of us, and the nation does not even seek to purify herself. The character of our rulers is but the reflection of the characters of the people; *they do not lead, they follow* public opinion; they have no higher standard of morals than the common standard, and in popular commotions they are like the froth of the wave, that marks how high it may have dashed.”

NATURE AND POWER OF THE PEACE PRINCIPLE.—No. 4.

THE AVENGER STAYED.

The history of the Danish missions in Greenland is well-known. Hans Egede, a man of apostolic benevolence and zeal, was the pioneer in those efforts to Christianize the wild and savage wanderer of the frozen north; and among his successors was his grandson, Hans Egede Saabye, from whose interesting diary we select the following tale of vengeance sternly purposed, but graciously turned into love by the power of the gospel.

The law or custom of Greenland requires every murderer, especially that of a father, to be avenged by the nearest of kin. Some twenty years before the arrival of Saabye, a man was murdered under circumstances of great atrocity, in the presence of his own son. The boy, only thirteen years old, was too young to defend his father, but he did not forget the debt of vengeance due to his murderer. Fleeing for his own safety into a remote part of the